

The CARPENTER LAD
& Other Poems

By RICHARD BURTON.

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THE CARPENTER LAD
and Other Poems

Other Verse by
RICHARD BURTON

DUMB IN JUNE

MESSAGE AND MELODY

MEMORIAL DAY

LYRICS OF BROTHERHOOD

FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE

POEMS OF EARTH'S MEANING

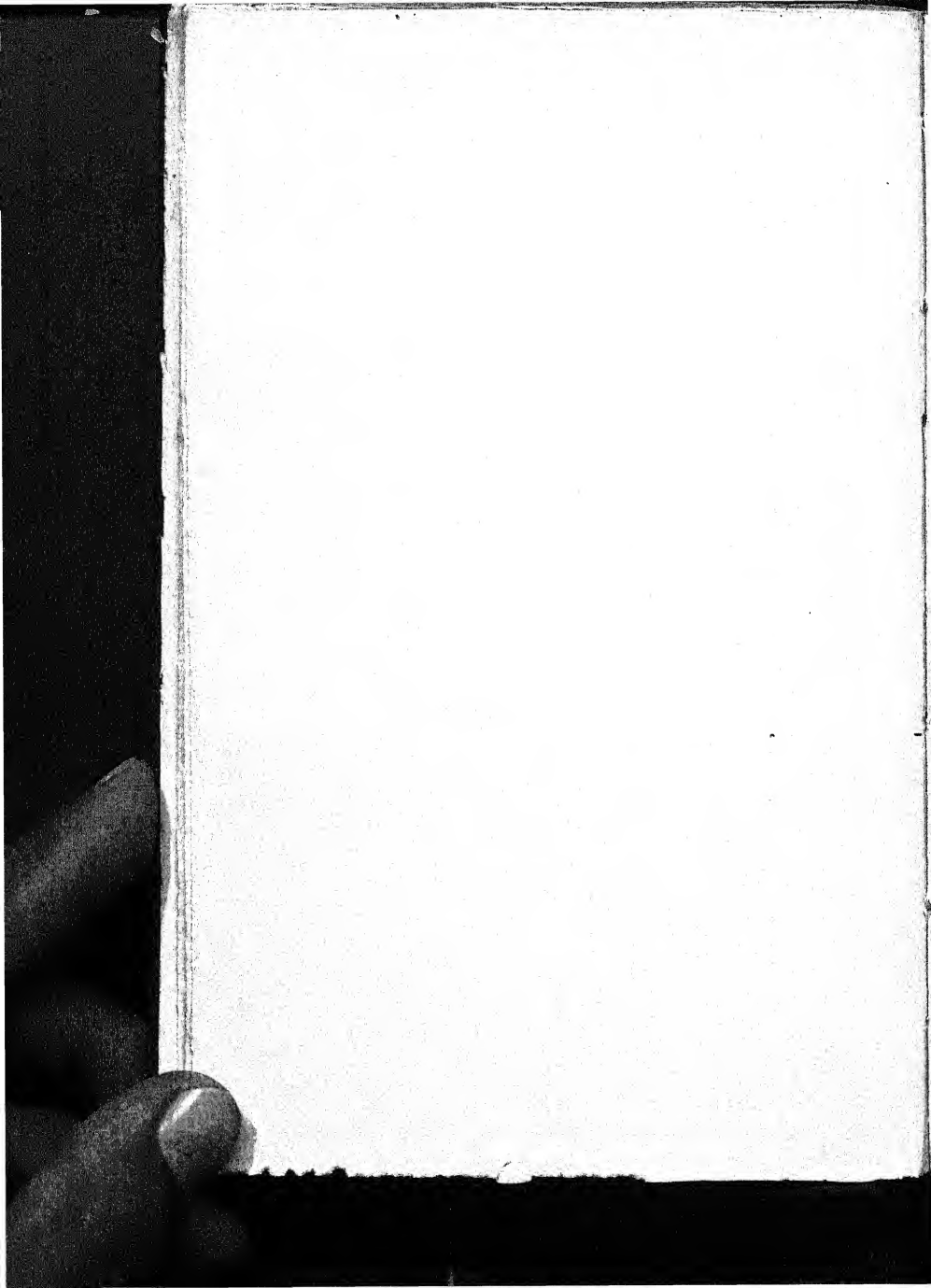
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To
RUTH GUTHRIE HARDING, *Poet*,
This poetry



PREFATORY NOTE

THE verse in this volume brings together such poems as have not appeared in the author's six previous books, the latest of which was published in 1917. The quatrain on Lincoln's assassination, in the group of brief poems entitled "Moments," won a prize offered by the Boston monthly, *THE WRITER*, for a four-line piece of verse on that subject. Thanks are due to that magazine for permission to reproduce it here. The lyric called "Art" was written at the request of The University of Virginia to appear in a memorial volume under its auspices, on the occasion of a Poe celebration. Obligations should also be expressed to *HARPER'S MAGAZINE*, *THE BOOKMAN*, *THE NEW REPUBLIC* and other periodicals which printed various of the poems contained in this book.

The long poem, "Conflict before Victory," was written for and read before The American Academy at its annual meeting in 1916, and except for being printed in its *PROCEEDINGS* for that year, has not been given publicity. It may not be without interest to observe that the view expressed in this poem, distinctly unpopular at the time, seems less so in these later days of almost universal striving to diminish the horrors and evils of war.

R. B.



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THE CARPENTER LAD
and Other Poems



The Carpenter Lad

JOSEPH'S son was a carpenter lad
Who died at thirty-three.
They deemed, because of a way he had,
He should be nailed to a tree.
For he liked to make folk good, and glad,
On the roads of Galilee.

His spirit was hale as the sweet, fresh wood
He used to plane and trim;
And the little children (who understood),
They always clung to him;
He spoke of a dream of Brotherhood—
Men hung him on a limb.

Do they understand him yet to-day,
Centuries afterward?
The child-like do, you can hear them say,
"Master, we love thy word;"
But, oh, how the others go their way,
As if they had never heard!

Wrangling ever, and what is it worth,
And how does it right the wrong?
Till even the flowers lose their mirth,
And the birds give over song;
And the beautiful, simple things of earth
Murmur, "How long, how long!"

Jesus came, with his winsome love
To hearten you and me.
He lived his faith, and the might thereof
Conquers by land and sea:
This carpenter lad, with a dream he had
That led to Calvary.

For We Are a Part

THE beautiful days slip by,
The months of the musical names:
September, October!

Say them over, and listen, and know
How they glisten, and dazzle the eye

With their challenging color that flames,
With their tints that are splendid yet sober,
And their deep-hearted cry

That is mingled of winds and of waters, and
flight

Of South-whirring birds who escape win-
ter's blight. . . .

Ah, the beautiful days!
Through a shimmer of haze,
Or in trance of a clarity stately,
Impassioned, sedately,
Keen a-cold or shot through with the sun,
They pass, and the autumn is done.

November, December:
And we sit by the fire where each ember
Must bid us to dream and remember. . . .

They go, all the beautiful hours;
And the trees, and the flowers,
The growing, glad things have their session
And fade in an endless procession,
Yielding up of their guerdon of bloom
To tumble life-stilled to their tomb,
While dearth and dun seariness replace them,
And earth's ancient arms close embrace
them. . . .

But their ruin is likewise their glory,
And that glory is ours!
For we feel they will come, young and death-
less,—
Their fairness how breathless!—
When spring calls them up from their
sleeping;
And after their hoary
Dim rest they shall rise and be keeping
Blithe trysts that to April belong.
So, our faith in their semblance is strong.
And we are less fearful to die,
As the beautiful days slip by.
For our sleep, like their sleep, has a seeming
Of kindness, and into our dreaming
Creeps Hope. . . .

All the beautiful things
Will come back, swift on wings,
Light afoot, and the wood and the plain
And mountain be lovely again,
Clothed on with most sumptuous vesture;
All the world make a gesture
Of joy. . . .

And, oh, love of my heart,
Since we are a part
Of the wonder, the back-coming gladness,
We, too, shall be free of our sadness,
And welcome, hand clasped, the returning
Sweet time, the reward of our yearning,
When the death-struck season of yore
Revisits us once more.

They Who Come Back

MY FAITHFUL dead come back to
me in dreams,
Just as they were before they went away:
Gait, gesture, look, they are the same, it
seems,
As when they fellowed with me, day by
day.

I marvel at their semblance, hold my breath
Lest, if I breathe, the vision should depart;
Almost they give me faith there is no death,
But only love that leaps from heart to
heart.

But, oh, I would not hold them as they come
Briefly beside my bed and bless my sight,
Speaking of little things, recalling some
Forgotten moment touched with old
delight!

A hand-clasp, yes, sweet words, even a
kiss. . . .
No more, they must not stay; as light
steals through
My room, I gladly let them go, and this
Is all I ever ask of them to do.

They must go back again. I hold too dear
Their memory to break the tender spell;
I could not bear to see them suffer here,
My changeless dead, who rest so long and
well.

The Glorious Game

I GO about dumfoundedly, and show a dular-
lard's glance,
But in my mind are spangles, and music and
a dance,—
Tra-la, the hid romance!

And I suspect, O brothers (and sisters, drab
and prim),
'Tis quite the same with all of you, with
every her and him
That goes in masking trim.

The whole world hides the truth; and, faith,
it is a parlous shame
To make a pale-faced misery of such a
glorious game
—With all of us to blame.

So let us be like mummers who grin and lift
their lays
And kick their heels at heaven a hundred
happy ways,
Sky-larking down the days!

On Record

I WOULD not bring a baby face
Smooth and unscarred, to God on high,
And say, "Hereon you find no trace
Of living, now I come to die."

No, battered up and down the ways,
I give Him back this proof of me;
Record of keen, tumultuous days,
Life's scars, for God Himself to see!

Monhegan Gulls

THE gulls on Monhegan
Talk loudly in their tongue;
The white gulls are old ones,
The brown gulls are young.

Above gray wharves they cluster,
Clamor and wheel and cry
For food cast on the waters
Under the broad sea sky. . . .

The gulls at Monhegan
Remain, while folk ashore
Go, and come back, and some time
Turn islandward no more;

No more to hear the ancient voice
Of waves, nor watch the light
Twinkle its warning, when the birds
Are nested for the night.

The gulls off Monhegan
Are populous and shrill;
They sweep over Burnthead,
But shun the graveyard hill,

And of the sky and circling sea
They seem a living part. . . .
Out of a dream their cries are borne
To my remembering heart.

The Last Stile

NOW when I came to that first stile
('Twas spring again, my dear)
I raised my head, and thanked my God;
I spoke it loud and clear.

When to the second stile I came,
(These April days are fleet)
I murmured: "Here a kiss she gave,
And how that kiss was sweet!" . . .

But when the third stile stayed my foot,
(Look where the shadows fall)
I bent my head, with misted eyes,
And spoke no word at all.

Hannah and Samuel

(1 Samuel, 2:18-19: "But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child. . . . Moreover, his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.")

BEING stricken in years, she deemed
herself barren and doomed;
Till blest of the Lord, she gave birth to
Samuel, her son,
Who grew into manhood, and into such po-
tency bloomed
That his name in the world has waxed
great, and will never have done.
She gave him up gladly to services holy and
meet,
And each year did she weave for him out
of her love and her care
A coat that should clothe his small body of
semblance so sweet,
To keep him all warm when his mother
no longer was there. . . .
And when in his seership, man-grown, to the
country he came
Where once he had played, did Hannah,
his mother, rejoice?
Did pride in her old heart leap up like the
leaping of flame,
As she uttered fond, cherishing words,
with a break in her voice? . . .

Yes, haply she spoke to some neighbor who
stood in the crowd:

“Behold, ’tis my son, see his glory, who
once was my own!

He goes like a prince, and all heads in obei-
sance are bowed;

But—where is my little, lost lad, with his
garments outgrown?”

Shakespeare Reads the King James Version

(ANNO DOMINI, 1611)

By the time the King James Version of the Scriptures appeared in 1611 Shakespeare had written all his plays. They contain many hundred references to the Bible, which he therefore must have read in the earlier Tyndale translation.

“**N**OW, by our Lady, here is master speech!
I swear such language is beyond my
reach,

Though I (quoth Ben) have skill to marshal
words

And make them peal like trumpets, lute like
birds.

But here is marvel passing Ben or me,
Our Lord come down to earth, in verity.

“Old Tyndale wrought full well, and I have
read

These long, long years his Book by board
and bed

And blessed him for it; but this Book of
James

Writes up in gold the hundred gloried names
Of them who took from Hebrew or from
Greek

The Word of God or of His Jesus meek.

“I’ll to the tavern, o’er a stoup of wine
Con once again this Treasure, line by line;
The old, dear Gospel I have loved full well
So fashioned, it shall cast a faery spell
And pluck a heedless world anew from Hell!”

Into the Heart of Life

I AM feeling my way into the heart of
Life,
And the way is long, and the years now
left are few;
And the sign-posts point to pain and doubt
and strife,—
And dream, and dew.

High to-day is low to-morrow, and dark
Turns shining weather, the while I trudg
along;
Crash of elements stuns me, suddenly,
hark,—
Sounds a song!

Help me, comrade, even as I help you,
Both of us faring on to the selfsame
Fate;
God be with us, ours be the dream and
dew,—
Soon or late!

The Hand

ONCE, long ago, I saw a piteous sight:
A child, a lad, too tender in his years
To know that Life could end so sadly soon,
Lay in the road, run down, and smitten dumb.

He looked a little ivory Innocent,
With one small hand thrown up against his
 breast,
Empty and open, as if asking Death
To put a white rose there, to light his way
Down to the Dark; . . . 'Twas dawn . . .
 he lay alone.

I swear, although the years have dulled so
 much,
And various agonies have intervened,
I can not drive the picture from my mind:
That one small hand still clutches at my
 heart!

Stevenson Makes Conrad Welcome

"AT LAST you come, my fellow of the
seas,

For whom I've waited long! Your hand.

Now, please

To sit while we like kinsfolk here recite
High-colored happenings by day and night,

Whether in Polynesian waters, or

Beyond Malayan lands, with sail and oar

Gladly adventured under sun and stars. . . .

How oft we steered beneath uneasy spars!

"Little we dreamed to greet and talk it all
In this snug haven. . . . So the fates should
fall,

Since we were cronies in the crescent will

To know the soul of man through good and
ill,

Everywhere round the earth, and then to tell

The truth so cunningly, we cast a spell

On all who wisely hear.

Come, quaff a glass,
'Twill help to make this hour in Heaven pass
(For frankly, friend, this heavenly home at
first

May seem a trifle tame)—I say the worst,
To show my joy in welcoming such as you,
A master-mariner whose yarns ring true. . . .

You smile, while drinking. Good! You
liked your drink?
That brew was made for sailor men, I think,
The like of us. . . .

In your dark Slavic way,
You felt Fatality, and I—but, nay,
The Celt in me put on a gayer mood,
Yet, Calvin in my blood, I understood.

“And we were one in that unquenchable zeal
Oceans to traverse with our questing keel
Toward island offings, or by shore to trace
Man’s devious paths to some uncharted
place.

Oh, the great heart of Life, the gipsy lure,
We knew and loved it all, and must endure,
Buoyed up by memories, as best we may,
These holy doldrums of our after-day! . . .

'The hour grows late . . . far down the
glamorous west
The sun goes sailing.

Friend, you need to rest,
After your last grim voyage. I were fain
To sit the night out, talking e'er again
With one earth-come, who freshly brings to
me

News of that underworld of devilry,
Delight and derring-do.

You would not go?
Now, by all dangers that we faced below,
This fellowship of yours, beloved Pole,
Is better than your drink to light my soul.
Fill up, yarn on, you speak to famished ears;
Picture the actions of my earth-lost years.
My bread was lumpish, needed your brisk
leaven;
How Conrad's company will color Heaven!"

I Dare to Love You in the Face of Death

I DARE to love you in the face of death:
Not death that's near at hand, but sure
to come
Some day, somewhere, when drawing further
breath
Refuses issue, as the lips go dumb.

We take our heaven in the moment's touch;
Our hands are lifted to protest the Fate
That waits all lovers, be they small or much;
The dust that chokes delirium, soon or
late.

With such dark certainty to block our bliss,
Nathless, the central fire that floods the
soul
Shines but the brighter, and our every kiss
Trembles with rapture that defies the goal.

Even unardent death must needs give way,
Seeing our love-lamp leap up clear and
strong,
Making a midnight glister like the day;
We hurl denial at death's ancient wrong!

With a Brooch

I PLACE this bauble, shot with lovely
light,
Against your bosom and its soft unrest.
You'll wear it, maybe, when some summer
night

By wandering odors and bland airs is
blest;
And those who look, shall say in hushed
delight:

"It has a double beauty—on her breast."

By Night and Day

I FIND you in the amber evening glow
And in the dearest moment of a song;
You walk with me where hooded sorrows go,
By your remembrance is my strength made
strong.

And in the mysticaest hour of night
Your soul, a star, flames forth to make the
day;
Along the poets' pages you shed light,
A sweet and secret gloss on all they
say. . . .

What though the roads be many, and run
far?
To follow them is but a little while,
Because you beckon, and the bendings are
But home-returning to your smile,—your
smile.

"Dear, We Have Sat with Beauty"

DEAR, we have sat with Beauty, you
and I,
And trembled with a thought of viewless
things,
So fleet, so frail, so seeming-sure to die,
Yet strong with wonder of ethereal wings.

Have sat in trance to Loveliness, with Love
Beside us, in a precious pact of three:
Love, loveliness and you—it sounds above
All earthly discords, like a song to me!

* * * * *

And though we transiently are driven apart,
And absence is an ache and an alloy;
We carry that shy music in our heart,
And we return to find but deeper joy.

Sitting Alone

SITTING alone, I brood to-night
On old, ungiven, wanted things:
The smile, the hand-touch swift and light,
The kiss that gave the moment wings;
How close the Presence clings!

The word of kindness, and the mood
When soul to soul was bared, and eyes
Looked into eyes and understood
The meaning that so often tries
For speech,—yet, oh, it flies!

The sunrise gladness shared by two,
The wistful evening hour of tears
Not all unhappy, since that you
Were part of it, along the years;
God, how it reappears!

The interwoven shade and sun
Wrought by our love into a Plan
That takes us two, and makes us one,
That welds a woman with a man
As only loving can.

But most of all, dear Heart of mine,
Past telling sweet, and piercing sad,
A memory that is half divine:
The dream-child that we never had,—
Ah, Christ, the wee, lost lad!

Vernal Magic

THROUGH all my days I shall be glad
of this;

That spring, that May and April weather,
too,

Was shared, Most-Dearest, was sweetly
shared with you,

And so the vernal time had double bliss.

For April walks in white along the land,

In blossomed white and pink and strange
dim green;

There is no seemlier presence, Love, I
ween,

Than April, bursting buds on every hand.

And May, with fuller revelry of scent

And sound and sight, down corridors of
Pan,

She surely must make joy for any man

With soul bewitched by spring's soft wonder-
ment.

But, oh, when this spring magic is a frame

For love-of-two, when you and I may see

Clear-shining skies and flowers whose
jocundry

Mounts high and higher like some irised
flame;

Can catch our breath at summer drawing
near

So innocently we are fain to smile,
Knowing such rapture is for no long while,
Yet knowing briefness makes it twofold
dear;

Then all the beauty of these lyric days
Cries out so poignantly it strikes us
dumb,—

A more than spring-like ecstasy has come
To lay a hand upon the lips of praise.

The Eyes of Love

THE doctors came, they looked, they
said:

"She is not ill, let her but lie
A day or two, at ease, in bed,—
There is no thought that she must die."

But he, her lover, heart like lead,
Watching the life-tides come and go,
Trembled nor could be comforted:
The eyes of love, they know, they know.

Old Loves

OLD loves, once so alive, but now long
dead.

They told the same sweet lies, they often
said

The same fond, foolish things,—lip answered
lip

With the same thrill, for Love's strong
mastership.

Time is an empty Temple of Delight

Where once Love's way was festal, day and
night.

And yet the newest pair of lovers smile,
Laughing and loving for their little while,
Without a tremor, and their look as gay
As those now dim, or these of yesterday.

Eternally they flicker to and fro
To Fancy's eye; for ever come and go
So light, so bright, so fragile and so sad,
The faded ones whom all the ages had. . . .

Old loves, dead loves, and dust upon them
all!

Give them remembrance for a coronal.

Spring in the Park

THIS day of April ardors, a careless
passer-by,
I stepped for a moment aside from the city
street,
Into the Park, where winding walks
And cunning contours of earth, with the
fresh earth smell
And the gleam and glance of pools that wait
a swan,
And withen trees on rising mounds wherein
Rest the quaint Pagodas,—all make a dream
Little and dear, from far Japan;
Right in the midst of roaring, keen New
York,
Roaring with trade, keen in the dollar hunt.

There I sat me down,
Glad to be free, glad to be told once more
That Beauty lives, near by, and ever calls
Lute-clear, if one will only harken and hear.

Then, as I sat and mused and drank it in,
Of a sudden, all the peering, great-eyed
buildings
Lining the Park by east and west and south,
A-stare, innumerable, primly intent on busi-
ness,
I saw were looking down into the Park,
Their barter quite forgotten, out of a myriad
eyes,
Tranced by this little Japanese dream of
Beauty,
And, lo, they spoke and said:

"Oh, careless passer-by,
Ours is not lust of gain nor housing of folk,
Not these alone;
Nor chaffer on 'Change as the shouldering
crowds go by.
We see you down there midst the tended
ways,
The pretty shrubs and serpentining walks,
With the wood-sweet Pagodas topping the
tiny hills,—
And we yearn, O God, how we yearn
(Regarding you there, a careless passer-by,
Out of our gaunt, world-weary eyes,
Aware of the sun-soaked bliss athrob in your
blood).

"For we, too, yearn for Beauty, and in a
trance

Solemn, unwinking, we gaze and gaze
Out of our sentinel orbs, and silently
Send you a brother-word this day, when
spring

Moves in ecstasy, and the exquisite sky
Softens the discolored town, and binds to-
gether

Into a sacred unison earth and heaven,
And fills a heart long drained of dizzy
joy. . . .

"Yes, we are with you, of you, all our eyes
See only yonder little tender dream
Of rock and swan and sky and sweet snatches
of water—

Message from overseas of an artist folk
To the big, bluff splendid land, lest it forget
Beauty, nor hold her holy, meek in her
shrine."

So the buildings spoke, when I, a careless
passer-by,
Stepped for a moment aside from the choked
swift street
Into a charmed demesne of Peace and Joy,
Where city noises lessened to sounds more
like
The twitter and chirp of birds;
While over all, far up, a sky of early spring
(Deep blue swooned to a paler opaline tint)
Blossomed and blessed the hour, redeemed
the town.

To an Air on the Samisen

LITTLE Princess of the small slipper,
And the great heart,
Here is my gift, see!
(From all other gifts apart):
A little token of ivory,
White, like thy flesh,
Flushed as thy lips.
With a mesh
Of carven figures bordering the edges:
Sailing ships
By river ledges
Where brown girls leap
Into the waters deep;
And tranced peach trees
Guarding their sanctities . . .
Little Princess, see!
And in the pool, a mirrored me
Making obeisance to thee,
Little Princess of the fan, and the almond
eyes,
With the bird-of-paradise
Woven into thy gown
Up and down,
And crosswise . . .
Oh, the sandal-scent of thy breath!
One word, for life or death?

Speak, little Princess!
The orioles sing above:
Is the one word,—love?

An Amulet

AT NOON, the cruel blow fell on his heart.
By night the sleepless tear would sudden start

And make a hell of memory; he said:

"When the day glimmers they will find me dead."

But, lo, a miracle! The sun uprose,
And gave him strength to meet whatever foes;

The morning magic swift around him drew
An amulet of ardor and of dew.

In a Friend's Garden

(L. C. H.)

LONG years have you been known to me,
my friend,

Open and honest do your deeds appear.
But as these beauty-bordered paths I wend,
I catch your meaning, hundredfold more
clear.

In warm rich dahlia's yellow, and the blue
Of flax, as tender as a turquoise sky;
From princely purple of the cosmos hue,
Or white moon-flowers that by day must
die,

Deeper expression of you do I find,
Depths that mere words ne'er told me,
subtle hints

Of soul beneath all showings of the mind,
An emanation from these flower tints.
Long years . . . at last, within this garden
spot,

You stand revealed, as earlier you were not.

To an Elderly Amorist

EVEN in passion, when grape-hung,
Rosy and round and dewy-young,
There bides a beauty, and we smile:
"Suffer them for a little while."

But youth shall pass, and passion wane;
The ineffable blush comes not again.
Yet, buoyant in the after years,
The soul laughs softly through her tears.

But, oh, thou satyr! Neither youth
Is thine, nor wisdom born of truth;
Loveless and loath, what irony
Is in the very look of thee!

El Camino Real

THE king's highway is thronged with
folk,

All manner of men go up and down:
Some walk in glee, some bear the yoke
And burden of the teeming town,
While others press, they know not why,
Hot-foot with hope against the sky.

But, oh, along the by-lanes dim,
Far from the murmur and the fret,
Go those whom God would keep with Him:
Lovers and bards, who have not yet
Forsworn the high and holy things,
Nor quite forgot the use of wings.

Lovers, and bards and dreamers, who
Prefer the stars, the quiet pools,
The grace of trees, the tender dew,—
To clamor that bewitches fools . . .
The king's highway, it lures the throng,—
But, oh, the by-roads and their song!

Art

ART has her altars and her avatars,
Makers of Beauty worship at her
shrine;

Earth may not daunt a soul that scans the
stars

And wets the lips with more than mortal
wine.

Imagination's frankincense and myrrh

Bedew the dust and sweeten common day;

The poet walks in meadows lovelier

Than ours, and visions light his wandering
way.

Once having known the ecstasy of these,

Once having glimpsed that high supernal
gleam,

A Sappho sings across the centuries,

A Poe sleeps, folded in that perfect dream.

An Old Tomb Opened

IVORY and gold and jewels fashioned fine,
Proud decorations of some dead king's
room,
Rise from their centuried sleep and freshly
shine,
Dazzling the daylight from the caverned
gloom.

Before such splendor from the maw of Time,
Crumble the scroll-like years; ghosts stir
and say:

"Brothers, we strove for Beauty in our prime,
Behold, bright news of our long yester-
day!"

In God's Acre

MARMOREAL hands across unbreath-
ing breasts:

How dreamfully the sleepers seem to lie.
Like that strange, hallowed trance that is
the west's

When sundown reaves all motion from
the sky.

Peace, the great word; peace from remem-
bered days

Of tumult quieted to perfect calm;
How wiped away the salt untr tranquil tears
Of souls who rest on the Almighty arm!

Kin Rest

MY KIN lie in a pleasant place:
It is bird-haunted, by God's grace,
And trees make seemly shade, and grass
Softens the footfall as you pass.

A heartsome spot to lie at ease
Midst tender grass and tranquil trees. . . .
It seems to make the Judgment Day
Look dim, and very far away!

Experientia Docet

HAPPINESS, *here's your happiness!*
Life's chapman cries his wares,
And ever have mortals followed him, along
Life's thoroughfares;
But trust me, lad, with the ardent eyes and
the fresh strong look I love,
They chase but a phantom, up and down, in
the promise of bliss thereof.

Joys? Oh, a million of them,—pleasures
that throng and thrill;
There they are for the taking; look, you may
drink your fill.
But light like a thistle floating, evanescent as
foam,
A carnival for an hour, for a heart that
hungers for Home.

Love? As you gain, you lose it. Fame? It
is dead sea fruit.
Dreams, and the waking bitter, transient for
Absolute.
Laughter is loud, but sorrow lurks in the
unbid tear;
Lonesome you came, and lonesome shall you
go out from here.

Courage? Yea, and a kindness, pity-born,
and the quest
To help and heal where may be, this is per-
haps the Best.
But Happiness, the harlot, take not to wed-
ded wife:
Pity and pain and pleasure, they measure
human life.

This is the truth, dear lad, the truth: I tell
it you out of my heart,
Swift or slow, you must learn it; learn it
from me at the start.

*Sage advice, but he listened not, the lithe and
ruddy lad,
For, lo, a slim girl beckoned, and the gleam
of his eye was glad!*

The Restored Parthenon

(At Nashville, Tennessee)

THE years are naught, and eld but
yesterday.

Barriers of space and time, they drop away
Before this symmetry in stones that make
A kind of singing that is half heart-break.

I catch my breath with wonder; in mine eyes,
Dazed by the modern mists, this blithe surprise:

Curve kissing curve in marvelous interlace,
Immortal mortising of girdled grace.

Fair, writhen shapes along the Pediment
Tell the full story of what living meant
To Greeks for whom such godlike creatures
shone,
To ride triumphant o'er oblivion.

Neptune, Apollo, Hercules the strong,
And Mercury the swift are of the throng
Of this white company; and women great
At home, in council or in warrior state:

Diana, Hebe, Juno, Venus sprung
Of ocean foam, whose loves all harps have
sung. . . .

The vision came to Phidias, long ago,—
In crystalline procession here they glow . . .

An early southern moon, a sky-sent torch,
Deepens to mystery the pillared porch;
Soft radiance bathes the Temple, wafts to
me
The spirit of each tranced divinity.

The Wonder Hour

(For Harding Smith)

I LOVE to give a child a wonder hour;
My wonder wakens through those ardent
eyes.

And in that pure delight I feel the power
Of deathless, old Romance to storm the
skies.

How easily the years roll back, and give
The zest, the thrill, the faith that filled the
days!

Such innocence fits my soul to live,
Such gladness makes me walk the morning
ways.

And clasping that small hand, that trusts me
so,

And trusts the story that is fleet and fair,
I, too, can people all the Long Ago
With sweet adventures out of Any-
where. . . .

The child comes back to little, homelier
things,

Yet treasures that dear moment in the
heart;

And I, child-taught, still seek the hidden
springs,

And in that pageant pray to have a part.

The Candle

A SMALL, brave candle in the gusty
dark,

See it upshoot,—to flicker, disappear!
The great night gulfs it, and the puny spark
Flashes but momentarily a message clear.

Yet by that light men live: their hopes leap
higher

Before that symbol; 'tis a sacred name
To chant wherever valiant souls aspire:
The protest and the passion of that flame.

Early Evening in April

A DRIFT of fragrance down a lane of
spring;

Peach trees and pear trees spill their pink
and white;

The lavender mountains loom, and mutely
fling

Bold arms to clasp and quell the sunset
light,—

An April spirit haunts the evening air,
Wistful and delicate and debonair.

In Praise of Greek

COME back, O lyric days, and bring
From gardens bloom-beset,
From pillared halls blown through by spring,
From hills that haunt us yet,

Those elders blithe, those sages rare
Whose torch illumines the night;
By their great shades, O Pedant, spare
To do them such despite!

The aorist is but the shell
Beached by a sun-bright sea,
Bend down, and hark: the mighty swell
Murmurs immortally.

Was it for this, ye gods, the lyre
Was touched in days of old?
Must grammar dim that leaping fire,
And parsing leave it cold?

We do such souls a grievous wrong
Their parts of speech to take
And coldly murder peerless song
For Lindley Murray's sake.

Give back, O Pedagogue, the love
Of music gaily young;
The immemorial magic of
That bygone, golden tongue!

Absalom

("O Absalom, My Son")

I HAVE a sudden thought of Absalom.—
Not of the matchless plaint of David,
 come
To know his darling dead beneath the tree;
On Absalom himself I brood, and see
His writhen body meshed and tangled tight
Under the boughs, as forth he rode to fight,
Helpless and holden, for the swords of foes
To thrust him through, and watch his dying
 throes.

When came that day of Doom, what said
 his soul,
As all his life flared up, a great red whole?
Did his fierce mind leap to his father's side,
All feuds forgotten, and a flowing tide
Of son-love mount before his dimming eye,
Until the tender king stood dumbly by?
His father loved him sore; and mourned
 him well.
Did not the son give back (Death's miracle)
In that stark hour of passing, love for love?

Old memories are strong, old haunts whereof
He had not, in his warrings, thought for
years,
Might flood him now, and draw the soften-
ing tears
Of loving-kindness, not too late returned
To bring once more the truth he long had
spurned.—

I think in that sick heart a final flame
Rising above all hate and fear and shame—
As there he hung alone—surged up, a cry
Rang through the wood, "Father, forgive,
I die."
While like a seeming sunshaft flashing there,
Shone out the splendor of his bright young
hair!

Science

A MILLION globes awhirl in unlit space,
Yet like to lamps that light the truth
for men.

For every star that turns a golden face,
What agonies, what raptures past our
ken!

Will love be love up yonder, fear be fear,
We earthlings know so sadly, now and here?

A universal tremor, blindly guessed,
Strikes through the void, with messages of
fire;

The half has not been told, the unexpressed
Is more than words, than prophecy is
higher.

The austere armies driven down the skies,
Whither their haven? Faith alone replies.

Insensate rock gives out a secret gleam;
New life, and strange, abruptly breaks the
sod.

Through a glass darkly, now; yet some man's
dream

May yield a vision that is close to God.—
Slowly, from link to link we build, to find,
At last, the meaning of the Master-mind.

Soliloquy

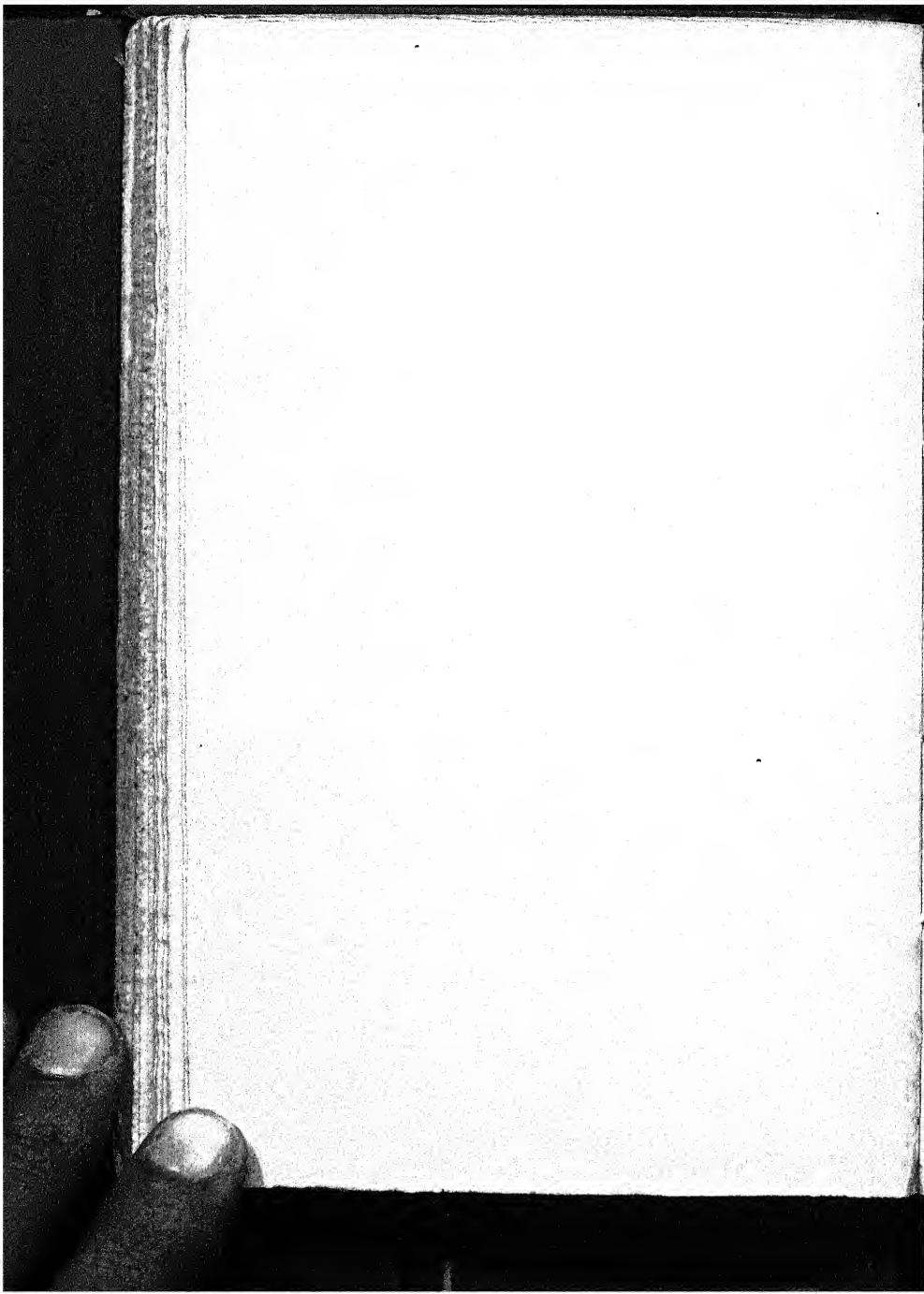
I AM a Player. On the stage? Not so;
But on the life-stage where I come and go,
Rehearse, play ill or well, then doff my mask
To rest, and then resume my curious task
Of being many, though I am but one.

I wonder if, when all the parts are done,
The lights go off, the house is emptied quite,
And I must step into the outer night,
The stars will calm me, and a cooling breath
Comfort my body, . . . on the way to
death? . . .

Meanwhile, the prompter's bell! His task to
each.

May God himself approve my curtain
speech!

Moments



Moments

LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION

ON PLEASURE bent, see how the
pressing hordes
Flock to the play where Comedy is queen.
A shot! And Tragedy preempts the boards;
Lincoln alone, in an eternal scene.

VENGEANCE IS MINE

"VENGEANCE is mine," the Lord de-
clared of old.

"Vengeance is ours," the peoples shrilly
cry,

"Since we are of the Lord." Guns will
grow cold

Only when both shall put their vengeance
by.

THE NEW MOTHER

SHE sat in a sweet trance, and blessed her
lot;

Above her little one he saw her brood,
The wife of yesterday; he knew her not,
Lost in her immemorial motherhood.

AIR FLEETS

YON humming argosies of air,
What swift, bright Quest is this they
dare?

They spurn the earth, long ages trod,
Buoyed by the upward-urge to God.

THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT

"THE meek shall inherit the earth,"—yes,
and the meaning is plain:
They shall sink and be trampled upon, tor-
tured and cheated and slain,
And have, as their great reward, while the
Strong go stormily by,
Six feet of earth—at the last—and worms
for a fellowship nigh.

OUT OF AN OLD BOOK

IOPENED, read: lo, like a sun
Out of that dusty ancients
A dead man's word illumined me—
Beauty is dateless, Life is one.

HE WHO LOSETH HIS LIFE SHALL FIND IT

POIGNANTLY, the Gothic arch
Pleads toward Heaven to find the One;
Paganly, some elm or larch
Opens wide to air and sun.
Ego-ridden, save thy soul!
 Lover, merge thee in the whole!

CARPE DIEM

DO YOU say this happiness
Is mere respite from disaster?
Ointment for some heart's distress
Sure to come in the hereafter?
Be it so. I choose to make
Merry,—for my poor heart's sake.

CONJUNCTION

PLANETS in close conjunction only seem
To shine together with fraternal gleam;
And souls that cross each other's orbit are
Farther apart than midnight star and star.

BENEATH

WORDS spoken? Garments that perforce we don.

Beneath, the thought, the dream that makes or mars;

And only God to know, whence he looks on
From some high vantage-place—beyond
the stars.

WITH A BARRIE BOOK

(For Jean's Birthday)

AN OLD year dies, and a new is born;
And the world holds lies and hate and
scorn.

But love and laughter are in it, too,
Laughter and love, they can be for you:
Dark things pass, and the dear things tarry;
Lo, here's Barrie!

EPITAPH

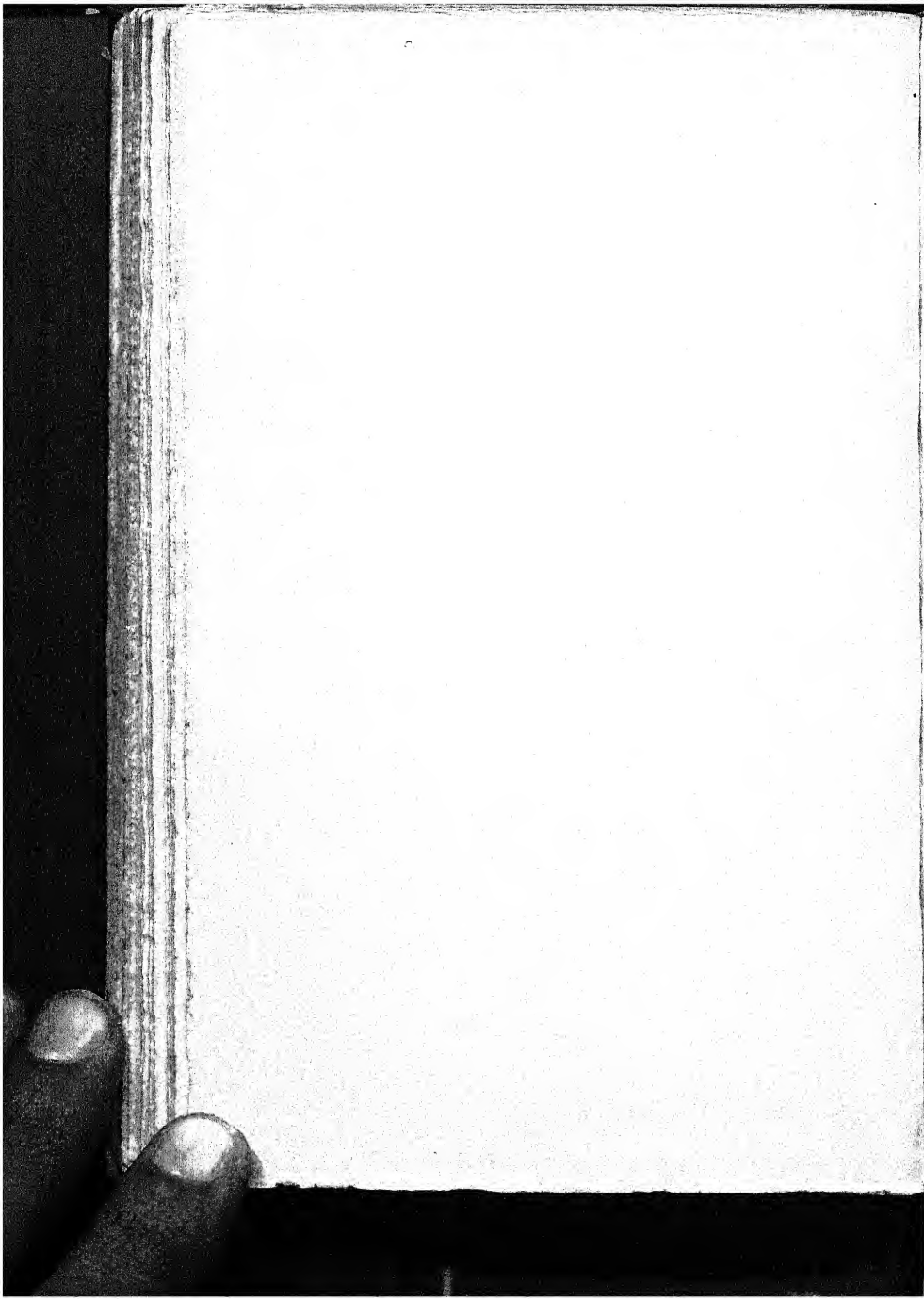
I LOVED, was loved. The puff of smoke
called Life

Could give no more. Nothing but dreams
remain.

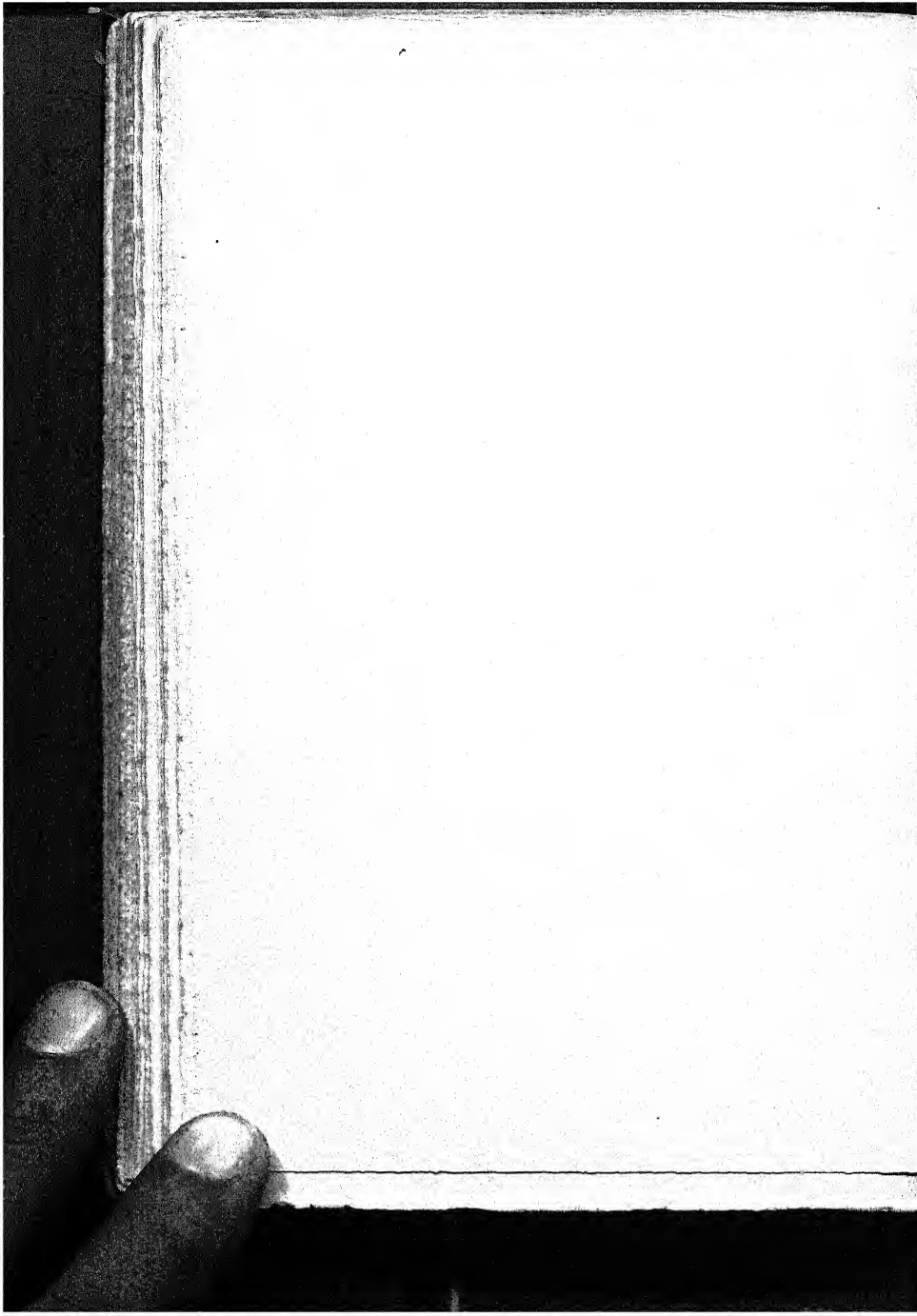
So, having given over bootless strife,
I lie where I may dream, nor dream in
vain.

THE SKY-LINE

MAN builds his barriers, obscures the
light
That only waits the word to glad his sight;
But heaven is overhead, though far and high;
The sky-line changes,—there is still the sky.



Conflict before Victory



Conflict before Victory

I STAND at gaze upon an autumn knoll,
Whose interwoven harmonies of green
And gold and russet red make music deep,
Somber, yet beautiful, and full of thought;
No tripping melody of spring, but rich,
Grave tones orchestral played by dreamful
 gods

Upon the season's resonant instruments
Of earth and air.

 A mood of memory
Broods all along the hills and o'er the fields
And down the river reaches; and where now
The forests steal the sunset pageantries
A universal harvesting is spread,
With augury of winter's stored-up fruit.
October's oracle sounds in mine ear:

"My name is peace and plenty. Look afar,
And list, and take the lesson to your heart."

And I, obeying, let my vision roam
Beyond this scene of goodly garnering,
Over the lands, across the sundering seas,
And up and down the hell-tracks dug by hate
And horror; see the carrion pools of slain,
The anguished wriggle of the dying; hear
The shrieks, the oaths, the ravings; mark
how sure

The beast in man, unleashed, springs up to
kill.

And circling far beyond this central pit
Of frenzy and of lust there comes a moan
Vast, vague and terrible, filling the air,
From violated shrines of hearth and home
Where women wait and stretch out asking
arms—

Mothers whose wails once brought those
bodies forth,

Who prayed above their little, breathing
ones,

So frail, so tender, come to such as this,
The mothers whose gray doom for birth and
death

It is to suffer and to lose the loved.

But, soaring up above all other cries
Of battle, in my dazed ear there throbs
Deep-mouthed, reiterant, a sullen word,
The boom and boom of cannon, detonant,
That is war's antichrist and deadliest cry:
No, No, it seems to say, again the *No*,
With intervals of silence sent to mock
All hope of ceasing. Now it stabs the air,
For ever *No* and *No*, a muttering
Of devils kenneled in their smoke and smell.
The drab horizon pulses with that pain;
The great denial of man's will to turn
Away from hate to labor and to love;
The hideous negation of the guns. . . .

As if released from out a torturing trance
In some black night, lo, I awake to see
The sweet, full sunlight flood about my feet.
October slumbers, smiles, and richly dreams
Her dream of wisdom, while sky amethysts
And opals blend to make the vault above
A miracle, the soul's own halcyon hour
Of reverie, a time to guess God's plan
For earth, and glimpse the meaning of the
years.

"Surely," I said, the while the vision fades
Of hate and horror, and the autumn fields
Glow more benignant to mine easèd eyes—

"Surely, Earth fought her way to scenes of
tilth

And bounty and the fulness of the ear?
The spring's sharp labor pains bring in the
ripe

Fruition and the reaping of the sown?
Surely, the grim long struggle up from dust
To meet divinity means only this:

Warfare eternal, strong subduing weak,
And weak a sacrifice unto the strong.
Might has been right from sod to throne of
God?"

No answer from October; distantly
The sullen *No* still sounds. The air is cleft
With red reverberations masked in reek
That gives the lie to every dream of peace
And laughs at love.

Again I face the month
So mellow in her fruitage. "Say to me,
Oh, glamour of the hills, is it not so?
Shall not the Right be precious down the
years

That linger at Time's portal? Shall not we
In after-days still strive to make it reign,
Opposing wrong with arms, our father's way,
And sanctified by blood their fathers shed?
For naught is precious but the Right; it shines
And shall for ever shine, God's luminous
gem;

And man must always band himself against
The leaguered hordes of devildom. Of old
So stormed the angels epically, and drove
Dark Lucifer from out their boundaries,
And so saved heaven, and made him Lord
of Hell."

A silence; then, behold, a wonder-thing!
For sudden looms against the purple leagues
Of harvest hill and mountain magicry
A figure, white-robed, eloquent of face,
With gracious majesty of mien, whose eyes
Seemed all ayeearn and sad beyond compare,
And in a voice more sweet than any bird's
That haunts the summer, spoke:

“Oh, foolish ones
The shows of earth bedazzle, who so blind
As they who will not see? The law of life
Begins in age-long struggle—woe the years
Innumerable, the never-noted tears—
Before there blossoms from the slime of hate
And immemorial shocks of enmity
(Blind, blind the impulse, and the mystery
 strange)
A small, white flower that grows and waxes
 great
Until, where once red passion-growths were
 rife
And yellow flauntings of earth’s sin, uprears
A stately lily, like a light from God,
To lead life onward, upward to the Good
That knows no law but this: Love lifted up
Aloft, and to be seen of all the lands;
The law of lust become the law of love
By high, supernal fiat; and the law
Of killing, that which shames the victor’s
 way,
Become that law diviner named good-will,
Of which the soul is peace.”

The tones thrilled through
The throb of autumn, but the Presence melted
Into the purple mists that crowned the hills
As with a coronal of grapes.

I cried,
Left lonely, and my doubts in-rushing swift:
"I can not see it!" All my soul was in
That cry of agony. "I can not see
How man shall ever cease from troubling
man.

Wrath, lust of power, and pride, and love of
gain

(Words, words, that only stand for self-
hood), these

Will sway him, and his weapons be un-
sheathed

To challenge all who seek to stem his will.
Grant that he love: his foe who comes with
hate

Must in that mood be met and beaten down
Into the better mood which in the end
Rounds into amity and soothfast hands.
Ah, how can endless eons alter this?"

So said I, and my soul yearned through the
words.

Again the flute-like voice (how strange a flute
Can pierce the orchestra's assembled cries
As if it were alone—that gentle voice!)
Enriched the air; the messenger returned:

"Faith is the evidence of things not seen,
And Love, belovèd, ye of little faith,
The greatest is of these: great to endure,
To conquer, and to bring the benison
Of perfect concord. Then earth's coarse
huzzas

Shall in the twinkling of an eye resolve
Into divine hosannas, and the lamb
Couch with the lion. This, the dream, can be
If only mortals, rousing from their swoon,
Love-wonder in their eyes, dare stoutly be-
lieve

Such strength is from on high; no battle-
ments,

Or engines of destruction or defense,
But they shall crumble at one pleading strain
Piped by the Shepherd whose poor sheep ye
are,

This long time gone astray."

Silence. And still

The golden pulse of Indian-summer-time,
Grape-purpled, winy-breathed, and drowsed
in dream,

Throbbled sentiently along the vistas veiled
To where, unseen, incredible, yet true,
A world-war ravaged men.

My restless mind,
Awed by the semblance of this Spokesman
sweet,

Lulled by such silver speech, must question
on.

"Is it not true," I said (the shape seemed
gone,

And once again I stood and gazed alone
On flushed October in that memoried mood
When Nature meets the spirit like a friend
For balm of kindly counsel)—"surely, Life,
The highest, holiest, must be wrestled for,
Ever the wished-for goal be won by pain,
The step ahead be taken inch by inch
In the brow's sweat; and how be won at all,
Unless in conquering, the conqueror
Stands on his slain?

And shall not man wax weak,
And in a supine ease grow fat, unthewed,
If ne'er in crush of conflict he be roused
To martial doing and to deeds that blazon
The record brave? To lay down arms is well,
To take them up is well, when clear the call
To master evil, save our faith, or be
A friend in day of peril to a friend.
To fight is but to live; perpetual peace
Spells death."

Then through the autumn mists again
The form, the figure white, reshapes, the
voice,
A strain of music, moves the vibrant air:
"Yea, man with man, shut in by years and
spheres,
Must struggle; life, so long as earthlings are,
Issue in conflict that is sent to bring
Out of the atom-dance a wondrous pact,
Ancient antagonists made meek at last
Through ever-surer seeing.

So will come
The mist-hid summers of that fuller day
To be, if only ye have faith. The fight
Is but begun. No more ensanguined fields
And hecatombs of dead and stricken homes;
No more the sequent lack of bread, the
maimed
And miserable leavings of the strife,
Nor shifted barriers to bicker o'er,
Sure cause for further parley: nay, instead,
No man shall seek to rend his fellow-man,
But each shall kill the evils in himself,
Combat undying, asking all his strength
And courage, never o'er till heaven and earth
Are as one home for all the tribes of men
Beneath the roof-tree of the universe,
Where Gipsy-like they wander now.

For aye
The fight to make insensate nature yours;
Harness the elements, uncover caverns
That hide the precious stones, make clouds
and winds
The subject of your pleasure, and enchain
The mountains, and bring verdure to the
deserts,
Making them smile.

And starry souls shall strive,
Forgetting cold and hunger and despair,
To reach the far earth-ends and leave a flag
On perilous peaks, and outposts ne'er attained
By earlier emprise. This battle-front
Shall never waver, nor one drop of blood
Shall soil its footsteps; all its paths are peace.

For ever also shall the fight be fought
To bring good tidings unto heathen hearts,
Heal wounds, and comfort them in darkness.

God,
Great Captain of these hosts, His soldiery
calls

To such endeavor; nor may any wight
Escape from shame if he be written down
Deserter.

Ever does the roll-call sound
In mighty cities, too, that harbor sin,
And so shall harbor till we take the van,
Fighters with God, to make the crooked
straight,
Pour sunlight's cleansing into darkling dens
And sodden shambles, and in triumph set,
Where once was only brawl and devious deed,
And each man's hand was raised against his
brother,
The undefeated flags of fellowship!
Yea, these good contests ne'er shall pass
from earth;
They are the goads to prick earth toward
heaven,
Whose very saints contend to please the King
In loving service. Heaven shows earth the
way."
The voice, in ceasing, was like muted song.
But yet again I spoke the earthly view:

"How often man becomes more beautiful
By sacrifice, through hero deeds and love
Of kin and country; spirits valorous,
How they do hearten us and gleam, and sing
The steps of laggards into marching time!
A man, a people, find their better selves
Only when called to conquer."

Answer came:

"There is in evil things a strain of good,
And e'en war's murders sometimes sow a
seed

To feed a soul anhungered; and the crop
Is not all wasted on the blood-bought fields.
But hero deeds and dauntless deaths, and
strength

That consecrates an action to a cause,
May find full use, may blossom and grow
fair

Without one blow against a brother; keep
The fighting fervor, let the blood-rage die;
Transform brute violence, that tears the
flesh,

Into an heavenly anger, ardor of
A soul whose enemy is evil done.
Not men the foe, but all that ugly is
In men; and hence how foolish-fond the will
To kill the body, let the spirit live,
And grow to greater power because we mar
And maim and straight destroy the spirit's
shell,

Piling up blows; whereas each act of grace,—
The cup of water held to alien lips,
The blow forborne, the trickery forgiven,
The kindness in the stead of cruelty,—
Flies up the blue, clear of the carnage smoke,

To join the others that go sailing there
Like airships manned of angels. For One
said:

'And if ye do it to the least of these,
Ye do it unto me.' Treasure the words."

Deep meanings flowed along the river of
This discourse, as a flower might float upon
The buoyant current of some spring-urged
stream;

Yet still my reason answered:

"Men are men
So long as time is time, and we must meet
The fashion of this world as those who dwell
Within the world. In other stars, who
knows?

This earth-star teaches us to walk our ways
In earth's sad wisdom."

Once again the voice:
"Yea, men are men, and men are beasts, and
men

Are angels in the making; dimly glimpsed
In Marcus, him the golden emperor
With words like honey dropping; or in him,
À Kempis, soul abroad; or Plato, who
Dreamt him a state for which men yearn
to-day;

And, plainlier seen, and lovelier to our hope,
In Christ, who said, 'They know not what
they do!'

For the last time my brain-born question
rose:

"How may we in this present state perform
These high behests and counsels? For,
alack!

Stern is the call, and instant is the stress,
And Love now lies a-bleeding."

As the voice
Floated in flute-like cadence, lo! it seemed
Diminished and the speaker far away,
Dimmer and dimmer heard:

"Ye believe in love:
Ask any pair of lovers. Ye are bound
In ties of blood where household gods protect
The homes whose name is legion; and full oft
The bond of native land makes fealty
Not less than claims of kin; it sometimes haps
The hostile folk across hate's barriers
Suddenly smile, strike hands, and are at one,
Though momentarily. Oh, will ye see at last?
The magic of this love from out the sky
Shall blend all lesser loves—the ties of kin
And country, and of lands which side by side
Seek the same freedom, worship the same
shrines;

Till, rounding out its destiny, it find
But brother man wherever mortal breathes,
Made one by loving-kindness, blind no more;

The children of that love that spins the stars
In harmony down august lanes of air.
Such changes are in nature, so in men,
E'en as the pomp and pageant of the fall
Gives way to winter, winter ushers in
The April raptures of the crescent year.
How can that dead womb blossom forth with
life?"

And as the voice became a silence, where
The Shape had passed, a breath of fragrancy
Stirred in the trees and hovered o'er the
grain.

* * * * *

Then hail, Oh, power beyond our pitiful
Earth-ken! Most potent of the gifts of God,
The love that is the heart of every song,
And opes the lily to release her scent;
This love that works through life, and bids
the stars

Quiver, yet keep their orbits; the same love
That makes man die for men; this holy thing,
This love, *must* be the future's battle-cry
In some far land, in some unguessed-of place
Where kindness is the one felicity.
Oh, country dim but dear, truer than Time
Or any present seeming, recompense
For seeing darkly and for waiting long!

Oh, sweet hid land, bring in the hoped-for
day,

And give us patience in this night of pain.

* * * * *

And if it be His will, be ours that land!

Saved by the sea from greed, with room for
men

Of gentleness to grow in, and with hope

Of comrade joy to help our one great
Chance!

Help us to nurse the vision far and fair:

New dream of battle, bloodless, beautiful.

No lazy paradise of sinews slacked,

But a confederated brotherhood

Of work and worship, and of sun-topped
heights

Because Life thrills with purpose, even death

(That old dark name we give the spirit's leap

Beyond the dark) turns radiant, rosy-lipped,

The while we brace us to go forward. Hark!

The morning trumpets cleave the clearing
mists.

Not drum taps, but reveille is our mood,

The conquering mood that leaves the ulti-
mate

To Him, the Great Commander; and we
march

As soldiers in the ranks, soul-satisfied

But to obey, and trust beyond the guns

Are robin songs and rainbow promises;

Deep graven on each heart this word of fire:
"Love conquers all. Press on: God asks
our aid." . . .

Day glimmers, wanes; more dusky broods
the hour;

Now steals the twilight up the heaven; no
sound

Of guns across the seas. But murmurously
Rises athwart the gloaming witcheries
The intersong of night. A vast content
Is on the land, and, look, above the line
Of warder hills a new-born splendor shines,
To turn the dun warm gold,—low-hung and
large,

The mellow magic of October's moon.

THE END

